

# Board Meeting

Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2024 at 10:30am  
In person. Annebrook House Hotel, Mullingar

**Present:** Catherine Heaney, Brid O'Donovan, Claire Byrne, Seamus Smith, Catriona Curtis, Ian Power, Mary Dorgan, Mary Corcoran, Seán Sheridan, Stephen Lycett, Fiona Ward.

**In attendance:** Graham Long, Acting Chief Executive, Adrian O'Connor, Carmel Beirne, Rachel Downes, Gary Watters, Enda Connolly (minutes).

**Apologies:** Teresa Blake, Sarah Harte, John Saunders, Mary Doyle

## Minutes

Item	Agenda Description
<b>1.</b>	<b>Declaration of Interests</b>
	The Chair invited Board members to declare any relevant interests. No interests were declared.
<b>2.</b>	<b>Board Business and Approval of Agenda</b>
	Apologies were received from Teresa Blake, Mary Doyle, John Saunders and Sarah Harte.  The Chair noted that this to be Mary Doyle's final meeting before she comes to the end of her term on the Board in April. The Chair noted Mary's dedicated service to the Board and exceptional attention to detail.  The Agenda was approved.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>
	The minutes of the meeting held on 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2024 were proposed by Seán Sheridan and seconded by Mary Corcoran.
<b>4.</b>	<b>Reports of Acting Chief Executive and Chair</b>
	The Acting CEO's report was taken as read and GL gave a brief update on some of the most recent developments since the last Boarding three weeks previously on 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2024. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Volunteer recruitment page is now live on the citizensinformation.ie website. This is expected to provide a good basis for the development of regional volunteer recruitment campaigns. LinkedIn and third level institutions were suggested as channels worth</li> </ul>

	<p>exploring.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The latest KPIs for January and February give early indication of stabilisation in client demand across both CIS and MABS. Analysis of CIS queries for 2023 compared to 2022 indicate the social welfare queries remain dominant while housing, money and tax queries showed noticeable increases. Members were referred to the regularly updated Data Hub on the <a href="http://citizensinformationboard.ie">citizensinformationboard.ie</a> website for more detailed statistical data.</li> </ul>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Committee Reports</b>
	<p><b>(a) Report from the Governance Committee</b>  The Chair gave a brief update from the Governance Committee where the board evaluation process and CEO recruitment were the focus of attention. These are to be discussed in detail later in the Board meeting.</p> <p><b>(b) Report from the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee</b>  The Chair of the FAR Committee presented a slide deck report distributed with the Board papers. The Chair of the Committee informed the Board that it is planned to move to combining the FAR Report and the Finance report into a single consolidated slide deck. The current focus of the Committee is preparing to meet ASM(B), the new internal auditors, to ensure that their work is clearly focussed and prioritised with a clear line of sight of completion deadlines for all future internal audit reports.</p> <p><b>(c) Board recruitment and committee chairs</b>  This item was taken under Item 10 (Closed Session).</p>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Risk</b>
	<p>The latest risk register was reviewed and discussed by the Board. Three new risks have been added related to (a) the potential costs related to the Patient Advocacy Service contract for NAS, (b) the retention of senior staff in CIB and (c) deficits in accounting expertise in the SDCs that could undermine financial processes and controls.</p>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Finance Matters</b>
	<p><b>(a) February Management Accounts</b></p> <p>The February Management Accounts were reviewed by the Board. The accounts currently show a surplus of €263,733 in February. This has mainly arisen due to lower than expected demand in the year to date for the SDC contingency budget, along with a delay in releasing funding for the SLIS Voucher Scheme as a result of that company having to complete a compliant tendering process for ISL interpreters.</p> <p><b>(b) Annual Financial Statements</b></p> <p>Updated draft of CIB's <i>2023 Annual Financial Statements</i> were reviewed and approved by the Board prior to submission to the DSP and the Comptroller and Auditor General. This included a</p>

	<p>Pensions Note to accompany the Annual Financial Statements.</p> <p>CIB’s <i>Letter of Representation</i> to the Comptroller and Auditor General was reviewed and discussed by the Board. It was noted that CIB amended the draft provided by the C&amp;AG to ensure it was factually accurate. The letter was approved by the Board.</p> <p>CIB’s <i>Statement of Internal Controls Review 2023</i> was reviewed and discussed by the Board who noted the particular challenge now facing all large organisations of managing cybersecurity risks and keeping ICT systems up-to-date. The Board expressed their satisfaction with the Statement presented. The Board also reviewed a report prepared by Mazar’s titled ‘<i>A Review of System of Internal Controls (SIC)</i>’.</p>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Procurement</b>
	<p><b>(a) Approval to award contract to Trojan IT Solutions</b></p> <p>Approval was sought from the Board to award a contract for Cloud Accounting and Budgeting Software for Service Delivery Companies to Trojan IT Solutions. This request follows the completion of a competitive procurement process. Following discussion, the request was approved.</p> <p><b>(b) Approval to commence procurement for Print and Design Services</b></p> <p>Approval was sought from the Board to run a procurement process for print and design services under a mini competition as part of an Office of Government Procurement (OGP) framework. This request was reviewed and recommended by the FAR at the meeting dated 6 March 2024. Approval was granted by the Board.</p> <p><b>(c) Approval to commence procurement of Insurance Brokerage Services for CIB and Service Delivery Companies</b></p> <p>Approval was requested from the Board to run a procurement process to appoint an insurance broker to deal with CIB’s insurance sourcing and placing requirements. Approval was recommended by the FAR at the meeting dated 6 March 2024. Approval was granted by the Board.</p>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Strategic Budgeting</b>
	<p>The Chair introduced this topic and explained the rationale for the strategic budgeting process and the benefits of CIB preparing its 2025 budget submissions well in advance of official submission dates. She emphasised the importance of thinking strategically and encouraged all Board members to rigorously interrogate the draft business requests that are being presented for their review.</p> <p>GL presented seven draft business cases plus a strategic context to the Board. He explained how the cases are fully aligned with, and essential to the success of, CIB’s Strategic Plan 2023-2026.</p>

	<p>The cases presented to the Board were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft Existing Level of Service Request</li> <li>• Draft Digital Strategy Request</li> <li>• Draft CIB Staffing Request</li> <li>• Draft SDC Premises Request</li> <li>• Draft SDC Staffing Request</li> <li>• Draft SDC Accounting Support Request</li> <li>• Draft SDC Volunteer Support Request</li> </ul> <p>The Board welcomed the presentation of the draft requests and held a detailed and extended discussion of the content, rationale and format of each. Numerous suggestions were made to the Executive for consideration for inclusion in the next iteration of the drafts.</p>
<b>10</b>	<b>Closed Session</b>
	<p><b>Item 1 Job description for CEO</b></p> <p>The Chair briefed Board members on the recruitment process for the CEO. A draft job description prepared by the Governance Committee was reviewed and the Board requested a number of amendments including adding various desirable criteria along with emphasising leadership experience across a variety of sectors. The Chair explained that the updated draft of the job description will need to be reviewed and approved by the DSP before the position can be advertised. The Chair confirmed that the position would be advertised as a 5-year contract.</p> <p><b>Item 2 Board review</b></p> <p>The Chair presented a summary of the annual Board Effectiveness Self-Evaluation. She noted that members were generally satisfied with the board performance, collegiality and respect for each other was highly rated and the Board Committee system is working well.</p> <p>Areas requiring more attention or development were identified and discussed. A number of initiatives are being planned to foster further improvement at Board level including introducing a ‘buddy system’, enhanced on-boarding of new members, de-briefing of retiring members, conducting a culture review (scheduled for 2025) and consideration of a potential annual event to bring CIB and SDCs together. Committees were also reminded that they all need to engage in succession planning as member terms are completed.</p> <p>The next board self-evaluation exercise will take place at the end of 2024. An external evaluation of the board will be undertaken in 2026.</p>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Dates of Next Meeting</b>
	Friday 7 <sup>th</sup> June 2024. This will be an online meeting.